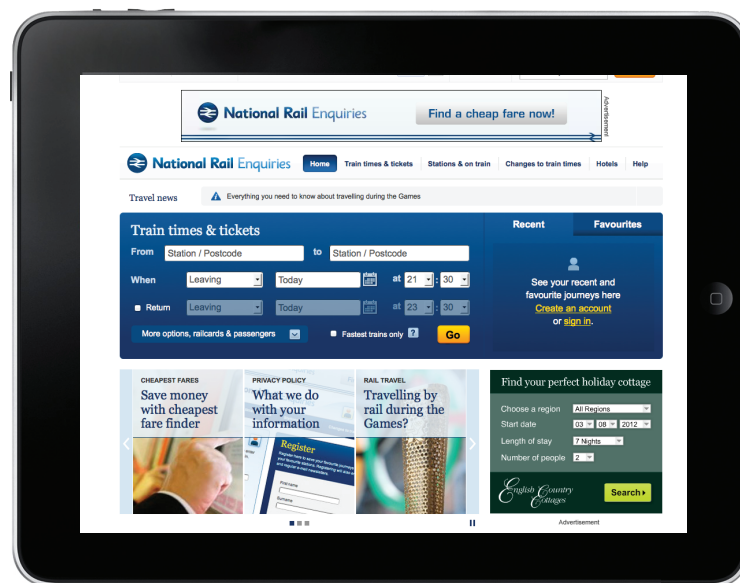
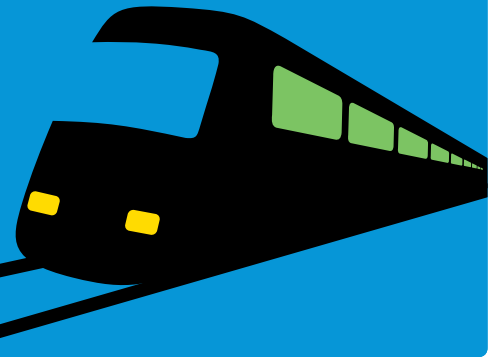


National Rail Enquiries: The Fast Track to Success



PubMatic

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Background

Launched in 2003, National Rail Enquiries (NRE) is one of the largest travel sites in the UK with 10 million unique users and 68 million page impressions a month. It is the “go to” site for millions of rail customers across the country and serves over 6 million ad impressions a day.

Having previously outsourced its advertising to third party houses, NRE brought this function in-house in June 2010 in order to maximise revenue and importantly, exercise greater control over the quality of the ads being served.



The Challenge

NRE believed in the practice of programmatic trading and was seeking a solution that delivered high revenues whilst drawing little on internal resources. Key considerations included:

1. Scale

Scalability was an important factor in choosing a partner due to the high volume of inventory available on the site. NRE did not want to work with multiple partners due to the possibility that many tags (and the accompanying passback or inventory waterfalling) would slow down load time and thus compromise the user experience.

**“If the basics are right,
the revenue will follow”**

Gareth Holmes,
Publisher Director, UK, PubMatic

2. Fast and efficient service

NRE's internal teams, from commercial to web development, needed to be assured that the partnership was with a company that genuinely had their best interests in mind. Whilst the reality is that challenges and issues would likely occur, as they do with any new technology implementation, the speed and attitude of which these are met and dealt with are pivotal in defining a genuine partnership.

3. Block-lists were essential

Previous partners had not offered a solution robust enough to ensure block-lists were strictly adhered to and any breaches resolved immediately.

4. Optimal user experience and fast page load

NRE's top KPI is driving ticket sales to their third party vendors with ad revenue ranking just behind in importance. Overall user experience and fast page load times are therefore paramount. To this effect, NRE employs an automated page load measurement tool and sets a threshold to which it expects all partners to adhere to.



The PubMatic Solution

NRE's decision to switch to programmatic trading required a Strategic Selling Platform providing best-in-class technology, results at scale, and a solid and dependable service.

With over 40% of PubMatic's employees dedicated to technical and account service, the set up process was completed in just 10 days. To ensure a smooth start, PubMatic visited the NRE Ad Operations team in their offices to fully understand their needs and requirements; the decision was made to implement the PubDirect solution.

Delivering scale, an optimal user experience and fast page load

The account set up was simple, transparent and drew little on NRE's internal resources. After agreeing upon timelines and next steps, PubMatic reached into its pool of 400 demand partners to negotiate and source new media deals on behalf of NRE.

To ensure fast page load times, PubMatic's account team linked all new demand partner tags to a single PubMatic tag. By implementing one tag on the DoubleClick for Publisher (DFP) server, NRE eliminated the need to run multiple tags, which can slow page load and cause user frustration. In addition, PubMatic's latency tool frequently checked that each demand partner's load times were in line with NRE's page load thresholds. New demand partners added by PubMatic after launch required no extra changes on NRE's DFP server.

"When the total inventory dropped to below 30%, PubMatic amended the pricing floors to bring it back up to over 40%"

Jonathan McCauley-Oliver,
Online Sales Manager, NRE

Brand and creative control

Particular high importance was given to brand control and creative quality. PubMatic's creative monitoring tool checked for block list transgressions and the creative services team diligently tested the creative in a test environment to verify ads were according to the block list requirements.

PubMatic's brand control features gave NRE full visibility into where the ads were coming from, which made spotting and disabling a blocklist transgressor fast and easy.

Maximising revenue

PubMatic's expert account management team worked with NRE to optimise for higher CPMs and revenue, proactively suggesting changes to floor prices, leveraging their strong demand partner relationships and analysing demand buying patterns. For example, when the total inventory dropped to below 30%, PubMatic amended the pricing floors to bring it back up to over 40%. Also, in order to manage for a typical lull at the start of each month, PubMatic recommended dropping the floors on RTB, which resulted in protecting the yields for these periods.

Fast and efficient service

It was important for issues to be resolved quickly and with minimum disruption to NRE's development team. In addition to the UK support team, PubMatic's technology and support teams in the US and India meant additional resource were readily available when needed.

PubMatic understood the need to support NRE's online sales team to prove the business case internally. Ensuring an exceptional level of service and steady increases in revenue helped win many internal challenges and proved PubMatic's commitment to a true partnership.



The Results

The flexibility of PubMatic's solution and service along with almost instant change in revenues has been a huge win for NRE.

1. The move from a traditional flat rate CPM-based model in Q1 2012 to programmatic buying with PubMatic in Q2 2012 increased NRE's unsold eCPMs by around 50%.
2. Daily sold impression volumes ranged from 3 to 5.5 million, averaging about 125 million impressions a month.
3. Revenues generated through PubMatic's solution increased over 30% from April to July 2012.
4. There were minimal blocklist issues with quick resolution and a high level of transparency.
5. PubMatic's detailed, yet easy-to-manage user interface, enabled NRE to spot seasonal trends and monetise them accordingly.
6. Increased visibility into lost bids has meant NRE could adjust floor prices for advertisers they would like to attract to the site.
7. Despite initial concerns over losing direct advertiser relationships due to RTB, PubMatic has empowered NRE with greater bargaining power with direct clients.

Revenues increased

+30%

and unsold eCPMs

+50%

Jonathan McCauley-Oliver,
Online Sales Manager, NRE

“What we needed at National Rail Enquiries was a partner in whose products and service delivery we could have absolute trust. From the outset, PubMatic's honest and pragmatic approach engendered this trust. PubMatic promised to increase yields without compromising the site's performance or its integrity and this is precisely what they have achieved.”

“The advertising on our site must always be delivered in the context of the site's primary purpose, which is to deliver rail travel and fare information quickly and accurately. Rather than paying lip service to this edict and then chasing the ad revenue, PubMatic made this a central tenet of their service.”

— Jonathan McCauley-Oliver, Online Sales Manager

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About PubMatic:

PubMatic is an independent, state-of-the-art media technology company, focused on helping publishers maximise the value of their digital assets, leverage their brand and extend their audience scale across all their chosen platforms. PubMatic's engineers, the industry's largest dedicated team, are committed to creating innovative solutions for publishers that enable them to capture the value created when consumers connect with their content.

About PubDirect:

PubDirect is a suite of solutions and services which allow premium publishers complete control over both monetisation strategy and execution. Powered by PubMatic's Strategic Selling Platform, premium publishers gain a transparent view of business across all their channels to enable the management of ongoing business, forecast future performance, and maximise revenue across both direct and automated sales channels.

PubDirect offers easy-to-use dashboards and controls, which consist of:

Unified Insights: Take informed action with real time dynamic reporting into who is buying and what is being sold across a publisher's direct and automated sold inventory.

Audience Direct: Layer first party data with third party audience data to create custom segments for targeted campaigns. These segments can be indexed against past demand to determine new revenue opportunities and then programmatically sold.

Deal Management: Designed to complement and supplement direct sales, enables the monitoring of site-specific sponsorships and custom solutions, context and site-based placements and targeted audience segments.

Unified Optimisation Engine: Gives publishers the ability to look across their buckets of inventory to determine where, when and to whom they should be sold for the highest value. With these tools, publishers gain complete control over their advertising monetisation no matter how inventory is sold.